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A PLAN OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

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This article is contributed with the view that it may suggest a way to handle the problem of vocational guidance in the high school. At present there seems to be no clear or definite agreement on this matter. The situation is muddled. No tenable theory is at hand. Some literature is available on the subject, but we are short of examples. The plan presented in this paper is offered as an example merely. It has not been written up because the plan has been brought to a state of perfection, or the problem solved and fixed; quite the contrary, it lacks detail, and on account of the brief time that it has been in operation, or rather in process of evolution, it is seriously deficient in any statistical confirmation. Nevertheless the plan has been a marked success in its working out, and can be defended from a practical administrative standpoint.

The organization of vocational guidance as carried out in the Mishawaka High School includes the following steps:

1. A vocational survey of the city.
2. Differentiation of the high-school courses for vocational guidance purposes.
3. A collateral reading-list on the vocations for use in the English department.
4. Frequent use of the assembly periods for talks on the vocations by men and women engaged in them.
5. Conferences with the members of the graduating class upon what they expect to do after leaving high school.
6. Talks to the eighth grade on the vocational value of the high-school courses.
7. Having students express their vocational expectancy and choice of course on their enrolment blanks.
8. A course on the vocations is offered for credit.

9. Placement of students in summer employment and in permanent employment after graduation or withdrawal.

The vocational survey of the city which was made three years ago may be considered rather under-elaborated and cursory, indeed, compared to some of the recent ones made by scientific experts. However, it was valuable as a beginning, being such a survey as any school can make. Three or four weeks were spent in visiting the industrial establishments, interviewing employers and employees, taking observations on the condition of workers, and collecting such statistics on wages as could be obtained. Notes were made of the preparation considered necessary to enter the skilled trades represented. Information concerning the social, civic, and economic conditions of the city were collected from many sources. The foreign population was analyzed in terms of its educational and industrial status. At the same time, statistical studies were made of school attendance, retardation and elimination, the character of the high-school population, and the vocational distribution of the high-school graduates for the last ten years. This was a very useful survey to make because the facts discovered were necessary to the organization of suggestive vocational courses and later of vocational counsel.

The suggestive courses are named and constituted for vocational ends. Students select a course on the basis of their vocational expectancy. For this purpose they are given a printed blank of instructions on how to choose the course which will most nearly prepare them for what they expect to do after leaving school. In making this choice, students are urged to consult their parents and teachers. Statement is subsequently made of vocational expectancy and choice of course on the enrolment blank. The suggestive courses allow of wide election and of easy transition from one to another during the first or second year. The following is a copy of the printed explanation of the vocational outlook of the suggestive courses.

HOW TO CHOOSE A COURSE

1. College Preparatory Course.

- a) For those who expect to enter college to secure a good general education for business or for life.

- b) For those who wish to prepare for any of the professions, that is, law, medicine, the ministry, pharmacy, dentistry, high-school teaching, etc.
- 2. Teachers' Preparatory Course.
 - a) For those who expect to teach in the elementary school after taking a normal course.
- 3. Industrial Course.
 - a) For boys who wish to enter a technical school to study civil, electrical, mechanical, chemical, or any kind of engineering, or to prepare to teach manual training.
 - b) For those who expect to enter a trade upon leaving school.
 - c) For those who expect to become farmers or to enter an agricultural college.
- 4. Domestic Science Course.
 - a) For homemakers, trained housekeepers, caterers, seamstresses, dress-makers, milliners, designers, trained nurses, teachers of domestic science, etc.
- 5. Art Course.
 - a) For boys or girls who would like to be illustrators, designers, architects, draftsmen, sign-painters, letterers, or art teachers in the public schools.
- 6. Four-Year Commercial Course.
 - a) For those who wish to enter business either as managers or as clerks, such as stenographers, typists, office helpers, merchandising clerks, accountants, bookkeepers, salesmen.
- 7. Two-Year Commercial Course.
 - a) For those who cannot remain in high school the full four years, and who wish to enter clerical work, such as stenography, bookkeeping, type-writing, or office work.
- 8. Printing Course.
 - a) For those who wish to be printers, ad-writers, engravers, managers of print shops in industrial concerns, book-binders, pressmen, newspaper reporters, etc.
 - b) For those who wish to enter a school of journalism.

A collateral reading-list on the vocations was prepared to supplement the list already in use by the English department. Fifteen points of collateral reading are required each semester. The books and articles comprising the vocational guidance literature were evaluated somewhat liberally in terms of the points required, and added to the list. These books are obtainable either in the high-school or public library. The purpose of this list was to furnish students with reading-material on, and encourage them to read about, the vocations in which they were interested.

Frequent use has been made of the assembly for talks on the vocations by men engaged in them. These men are secured some time in advance by the teacher or class responsible for the assembly

program that day. These speakers, if they are to deal with a vocation, are handed a copy of our plan for the analysis of a vocation and the suggestion is made that the outline will give them an idea of what is wanted. Many of these talks have been most interesting and inspiring, as they generally lay bare the inner facts and workings of a vocation, and are often accompanied by demonstrations or experiments. Where the speaker cares to prepare a paper, a copy is filed as a part of the vocational guidance literature. The following is a partial list of subjects dealt with in this manner, hobbies for high-school students which may later become their vocations: the mechanical processes in the production of a metropolitan daily, the job of a reporter for a big daily newspaper, banking, chemical engineering, bearing especially on the chemistry of rubber, the legislator, the work of city inspector, the office of mayor, law as a profession, dentistry and dental hygiene, and the commercial vocations. Educational films on the trades and various occupations are another source of information on the vocations used in the assembly.

The conferences with the members of the graduating class some time during the last semester of their course is a most fruitful source of help to them. If they wish to continue their education they are given the essential facts about various educational institutions they may wish to enter, and are helped to select the best one for their purposes. If they expect to go to work all the facts obtainable about any employment they desire to enter are furnished them. If the students have made no choice of further education or of future employment, their attention is called to the opportunities of continued education, to the various types of vocations, and to any jobs which are on hand at the time. The initial preparation and continued education necessary to advancement and full success in any vocation are always emphasized. Of course, each case is an individual and peculiar one, calling for different treatment. To discuss adequately the subject of this paragraph would require the statement of various sample cases. This cannot be done here. Suffice it to say, this sort of work is an excellent opportunity for a good man to earn his salary. The high-school graduate need not be turned out in the cold to shuffle about aimlessly.

Two or three talks are given the eighth grade near the close of a semester on the vocational value of the high-school courses. The various suggestive courses are explained. Each pupil is given a copy of the courses and the blank on how to choose a course. Later, a questionnaire asking for his decisions, and all other facts which may be useful for further developments, is filled out by the pupil and tabulated for use by the office on enrolment day. The enrolment card asks the following questions relative to vocational guidance: Do you expect to complete a high-school course? What do you expect to do after graduation? Were you employed during the summer? What doing? Wages per week? Are you employed mornings or evenings during the school year? What doing? Wages per week? What is the occupation of your parents? What course have you selected? Where do you expect to go to college? The answers to these questions are tabulated and graphed to show the following facts: (1) the distribution of students by courses, (2) the distribution of students, according to vocational choice, (3) the occupational distribution of parents, and (4) the employment statistics of the students. A new enrolment card is filled out by the student each semester, so that this information is kept up to date. All these facts are very material for vocational guidance both in the aggregate and in the case of the individual.

Finally a course for half-credit is given, dealing with the vocations, and in particular those vocations in which the members of the class are interested. The aim in offering this course is three-fold: (1) to give vocational guidance, (2) to collect information about the vocations for the use of the office, and (3) to present a course organized in a manner such that it will afford the student as much content value and intellectual training as any of the social sciences, e.g., sociology, economics, or history. The following outline for the study of a vocation is used as a point of departure for the course.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF A VOCATION

- I. General statement concerning the vocation.
 1. Duties of one engaged in it.
 2. Importance of it to the public.
 3. Number engaged in it in Mishawaka.

4. Relative number engaged in it in general.
5. Relative capital invested in it.
- II. Personal qualities demanded by the vocation.
 1. Qualities of manner, temperament, character, and native ability necessary to success.
 2. Physical demands of the vocation.
- III. Preparation required for entrance into it.
 1. General education.
 2. Special or vocational education.
 3. Apprenticeship conditions.
 4. Experience required.
 5. No preparation.
- IV. Wages earned by workers in the vocation.
 1. Range of wages made (table showing distribution of all cases).
 2. Average wage per week.
 3. Relation of wages to length of experience and preparation.
- V. Length of working season, working week, working day, etc.
- VI. Health of workers in the vocation.
 1. Healthful or unhealthful conditions of the work.
 2. Dangers, accidents, or risks.
- VII. Social standing of the workers.
 1. Surplus time for recreation and enjoyment.
 2. Surplus income for pleasure and the comforts of life.
 3. Value of the vocation as a social service.
 4. Any other items of peculiar interest in this connection.
- VIII. Opportunities for employment.
 1. In Mishawaka.
 2. In general.

One-fourth of the course is taken up by readings and discussions bearing on the relative importance of the various items in the outline to one choosing a vocation. For this purpose the following literature is chiefly used, *Elements of Economics* by Burch and Nearing; *Materials for the Study of Economics*, Marshall, Wright, and Field; *The Choosing of a Vocation*, Parsons; *Hygiene and the Worker*, Tolman, and reports on readings from other similar sources. This study is continued until students possess the economic background necessary to interpret the outline and apply it to the analysis of a vocation. The various types of vocations are then defined, illustrated, and compared, item for item. The types taken are the professions, managerial pursuits, skilled trades, merchandising or salesmanship, clerical work, agricultural pursuits,

and unskilled labor. Each student then makes a classification of the vocations represented in the city under the foregoing heads. The sources for this work are the city directory, interviews, visits to the business district and the industries. These lists are brought to class and the validity of the classifications debated. One student then collects the lists and prepares a complete, typewritten list to be filed in the vocational guidance literature. From this list the students select a vocation for a term report.

Considerable importance is attached to the term report. The material must be handed in for criticism beforehand and presented in final typewritten form, arranged according to the order of topics in the outline. All credit is withheld until the report represents an actual contribution. The method and material for these reports are assigned through conferences. Readings in the vocational guidance literature are suggested, newspaper and magazine articles are collected, interviews are held with workmen, and observations made of the vocations as carried on in the city. These reports are filed in the library for future use. The best and most interesting ones are brought before the class. The following are some of the vocations on which students are preparing reports this semester: machinist, trained nurse, office work for girls in Mishawaka, telephone operator, unskilled factory work for girls in Mishawaka, printer's trade, moulder, sign-painter, librarian, and architect.

After the reports are under way, one vocation representing each type is selected for study. The vocations so taken are treated analytically. The vocations selected for this purpose are those upon which there is the most information accessible to the class. These vocations are used as samples for the illustration and comparison of the types of occupations. Having gained this broad view of the vocations, the students are asked to write upon what they wish to do as first and second choice, after leaving high school. The answers to this question are tabulated under the heads of first choice and second choice. This tabulation furnishes the topics for the remainder of the course and indicates the relative emphasis due each. This part of the course is the most interesting to students. The material for this work is difficult to obtain.

General reading is available in the vocational guidance literature. Questionnaires, interviews, excursions and observations, talks and papers by workers, magazines, newspaper clippings, and research along many lines must be relied upon to secure the facts necessary for profitable treatment of these topics.

Some scheme of vocational guidance should be in operation in every high school. The purpose of secondary education is often stated as being the progressive discovery and development of the special interests and talents of the individual. Vocational guidance is the administrative device *par excellence* for this purpose. It may accomplish at least five admirable things: (1) It is a means of coming into personal and helpful contact with students and influencing their lives in a vital way. (2) Emphasis of the vocational motive creates a new attitude in students toward their school work. (3) The study of the vocations is a very effective point of contact between the academic activities of the school and business and the industries. (4) Students are furnished with proper information for the choice of a vocation or of further education. (5) The employment and follow-up system provides a safe and wise transition from school to the industries.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE LITERATURE FOUND HELPFUL

1. *Vocations*: ten volumes dealing with the mechanic arts, home-making, farm and forest, business, the professions, public service, education, literature, music, and the fine arts. Edited by William DeWitt Hyde; Hall & Locke, Boston.
2. *Choosing a Vocation*, by Frank Parsons; Houghton Mifflin Co.
3. *Training the Boy*, by William A. McKeever; Macmillan.
4. *Vocations for Girls*, Lasalle and Wiley; Houghton Mifflin Co.
5. *Vocations for Girls*, by E. W. Weaver; A. S. Barnes Co.
6. *Vocations for Girls*, Vocation Bureau, 6 Beacon Street, Boston.
7. *Vocational Guidance*, No. 14, Bulletin of Bureau of Education.
8. *Vocational Guidance of Youth*, by Meyer Bloomfield; Houghton Mifflin Co.
9. *Engineering as a Profession*, by Ernest McCullough; David Williams Co.
10. *Choosing an Occupation*, a bibliography of vocational guidance, Public Library, Brooklyn.
11. *Vocations for Boys*, Vocation Bureau, 6 Beacon Street, Boston.
12. Catalogues of educational institutions.
13. *College Entrance Requirements*, by Clarence D. Kingsley; No. 7, Bulletin of the Bureau of Education.